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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 24th MEETING

Chairman:

Mr. KHAN

(Pakistan)

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 88: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION (continued) (A/49/204-E/1994/90, A/49/205-E/1994/91, A/49/229, A/49/256, A/49/307, A/49/378, A/49/381, A/49/395, A/49/412-S/1994/1078, A/49/422-S/1994/1086, A/49/424 and Add.1, A/49/479, A/49/493-S/1994/1142, A/49/506, A/49/542)

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1. Mr. DESAI (Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development), introducing the note by the Secretary-General on renewal of the dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership (A/49/542), said that the subject was of vital importance for the work of the Committee and of the United Nations. It was essential to establish a forum for such dialogue so that development cooperation among countries could be based on an understanding of mutual interests, aims and commitments.

2. The note, submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 48/165 of 21 December 1993, contained an analysis and recommendations concerning ways of promoting dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership.

3. Such a dialogue was essential in view of the growing interdependence of countries in the environmental, economic and social fields, which called for a

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forum in which they could harmonize their interests, forge agreements, formulate shared objectives and prepare joint programmes.

4. The time had come to think about new forms of dialogue. The major changes that had occurred in recent years warranted a certain amount of optimism regarding the possibility of preparing constructive and effective joint action programmes in different areas and between countries at different levels of development, learning from the mistakes and successes of the past.

5. He was interested in hearing proposals on how to strengthen existing forums and suggestions regarding what other types of forums could be used. He was also interested in considering the interaction between forums within and outside the United Nations and between Governments and non-governmental participants.

6. The content of the dialogue would depend on the whole range of developments in the United Nations system. Discussions in the Committee were closely interlinked with discussions regarding the conclusions and recommendations of the Secretary-General's report on an agenda for development. The form and content of the dialogue concerning development would be of key importance for the activities of the United Nations and for international economic and political development.

7. Mr. ZĚBRAKOVSKÝ (Czech Republic) said that his country had been created two years previously at a time of global economic recession and of disintegration of Eastern European markets but also at a time of growing integration and liberalization. Those trends had had a significant impact on the pace and planning of economic restructuring and development in the Czech Republic. Paradoxically, the increasingly pronounced economic and political integration processes throughout the world were frequently accompanied by separatist tendencies. Integration groupings were being formed or restructured in many regions with a view to creating more favourable conditions for the movement of goods, services, capital and labour within the new groups.

8. As a small State, the Czech Republic could not stand apart from major global development trends and it had sought to strengthen its position with respect to international trade and economic cooperation. After the partition of Czechoslovakia, the Czech Republic had become a member of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and had taken part in the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations, making significant concessions in terms of access to its markets for industrial and agricultural goods and services. The Czech Republic was confident that improved market access and the formulation and implementation of equitable multilateral trade rules would ease the transition to a market economy, facilitate economic reform and stimulate sustainable economic growth and the integration of the countries concerned into the multilateral trade system and the world economy.

9. The programme of the World Trade Organization (WTO) should reflect each country's needs and priorities in a balanced and equitable way. Addressing such issues as business practices, anti-trust regulations and multilateral trade rules would strengthen the world economy. Countries whose economies were in

transition needed better access to markets and fair application of trade rules and competition. The multilateral trading system should play an effective role in that process.

10. The transformation of the economies of the Czech Republic and other Central and Eastern European countries provided increased market opportunities for trading partners, including developing countries.

11. Sustainable development and international economic cooperation were closely intertwined; together they represented an important development concept for future decades. The international community understood and accepted that concept, and there were institutional structures for it within the United Nations system, specifically, the Commission on Sustainable Development.

12. There were serious issues to be tackled, such as the transfer of technology, industrial development cooperation, adjustment of national or regional development strategies to the available capacities, and the eradication of poverty. The great potential of all countries for achieving sustainable development could be realized, if everyone adopted more rational and sensible economic policies.

13. The potential for cooperation among developing countries and between developing countries and countries in transition was still underutilized. In addition, procedures for the transfer of technology, within or outside the United Nations, must be improved not only in terms of comprehensiveness, adequacy and the speed with which information was processed and requests were dealt with, but primarily in terms of the principles and "philosophy" of such transfers and the corresponding organizational arrangements.

14. Mr. RAKOTONAIVO (Madagascar) said that the item under consideration was very important, because it related to two essential goals: assessment of progress in the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the eighth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and analysis of the establishment of the world trade system resulting from the Uruguay Round. UNCTAD should play an important part in the field of technical cooperation in order to help the developing countries, and especially the least developed countries, take maximum advantage of the Marrakesh Agreements.

15. His delegation welcomed the structural reform of the intergovernmental machinery of UNCTAD as reflected in the creation of three Ad Hoc Working Groups on Trade, Environment and Development, on the Role of Enterprises in Development, and on Trading Opportunities in the New International Context.

16. The major trading countries should promptly ratify the Final Act of the Uruguay Round, so as not to delay the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO). The new organization's governing bodies and the decisions taken should be based upon transparent, universal and democratic machinery, and should ensure sufficient participation of the developing countries and strict and equitable application of the new rules and multilateral disciplines. Also,

the agreements should be complemented by provisions to ensure close supervision of those rules and disciplines, including special measures in favour of the least developed countries.

17. His delegation shared the concern expressed by the developing countries regarding the negative effects of the Uruguay Round agreements, in terms of the erosion of preferential margins and the availability of adequate supplies of foodstuffs in conformity with existing conditions.

18. The question of trade flows should be considered in the context of the development of third world countries and relations between the commodities sector and the other sectors of the economy. The obstacles impeding the access of products from developing countries to international markets must be removed, for the free trade system resulting from the Uruguay Round might well impose additional restrictions on the countries of the South.

19. Regarding international assistance, it was necessary to take account of the problems referred to at the Conference of African Ministers of Trade held recently in Tunis: the immense need for financial and technological resources, the increase in production capacity, and the diversification of commodities. Madagascar also attached great importance to the establishment of a diversification fund for Africa's commodities.

20. The eradication of poverty in the developing countries was one of the greatest problems facing the international community. Poverty could only be overcome if economic growth was accelerated and sustained and if radical solutions were found to the economic, political and social problems which were the underlying causes of underdevelopment. The international strategy to combat poverty should not be restricted to exchanges of information; it should include concrete measures relating to job creation, improvement of markets and social and political institutions, participation of the most vulnerable groups in development, social protection for the poorest sectors, and implementation of Agenda 21.

21. Mrs. MAIKARFI (Niger) said that, as the Secretary-General had pointed out in his report (A/49/572), poverty remained the major single social ill on the global scale. For that reason, Niger welcomed the proclamation of 1996 as the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, and the fact that the struggle against poverty was one of the main themes of the World Summit for Social Development.

22. The scale of the problem was evident. It had been documented in numerous studies, surveys, campaigns and agreements which had also identified those parts of the world in which the situation was most critical. According to the World Economic and Social Survey, 1994, 90 per cent of the 1,500 million people living in absolute poverty were concentrated in the developing countries, particularly Africa and Asia. In the least developed countries, it was no longer a question of poverty, but rather of chronic squalor.

23. She was pleased to see that it had been acknowledged in various international instruments and at various meetings, that the international community had a collective responsibility to combat poverty. As the Secretary-General pointed out in his report a few concrete and urgent decisions and measures would suffice to bring about a considerable alleviation of the tragic consequences of poverty.

24. In the face of the appalling spectacle of 1,500 million people living in poverty, there was little point in reiterating the importance of the struggle against poverty, unless the aim was to salve one's conscience at little cost to oneself. There was little point in reiterating that there was an indissoluble link between development, peace and international security, unless those words were followed by practical deeds. While acknowledging the efforts made by numerous donor countries, for whose help Niger was grateful, she said that much remained to be done.

25. Within the United Nations system, the measures taken to combat poverty should aim at the provision of basic social services, such as health, education and housing, and the creation of jobs in order to increase household incomes. To be successful, those measures should be adopted in a more favourable economic environment, characterized by the cancellation or considerable reduction of all types of debt for all debtor countries, above all the least developed countries and particularly African countries; fulfilment by countries of their commitment to dedicate 0.7 per cent of their gross national product to official development assistance; improved access to world markets for the products of developing countries, and support for the industrialization programmes of developing countries by transferring appropriate and environmentally sound technology. By adopting those basic measures, donor countries could contribute to a radical alleviation of the effects of poverty and boost economic growth in developing countries

26. Mr. RAJKHAN (Saudi Arabia) said that the high standard of living and the job opportunities in the Gulf region attracted many foreigners. In Saudi Arabia alone there were 4 million foreigners employed in the public and private sectors. They unquestionably participated in and contributed to the development of Saudi Arabia. Moreover, with regard to international economic cooperation and the strengthening of that cooperation, the money sent by those foreign workers to their countries of origin helped to improve the standard of living and defray the cost of development and education programmes in those countries. The financial situation in such countries had improved because they had been able to finance their imports with those remittances. That, therefore, was an example of international economic cooperation in the broadest sense of the term.

27. Foreign workers in the Gulf region also acquired skills and technical training that helped to improve the standard of living of their countries of origin when they returned to them. What was taking place in Saudi Arabia was also taking place in the other countries that were members of the Gulf Cooperation Council and constituted a practical example of cooperation among developing countries.

28. With regard to the strengthening of economic cooperation in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia had welcomed the peace process in the region, which would certainly help to strengthen the economies of all the countries of the region if genuine cooperation were achieved. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia, in his speech before the General Assembly at the opening of the current session, had pointed out that the member countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council had contributed to the peace process in the Middle East since it had begun in Madrid, had encouraged Arabs and Israelis to continue their peace negotiations and had made effective contributions to the multilateral negotiations. Saudi Arabia, for its part, was taking steps of various kinds, both bilateral and multilateral, to ensure that peace prevailed in the region, for peace was vital if the region's countries were to achieve sustainable development and be able to protect the environment. Saudi Arabia endorsed the reports of the Secretary-General on "An Agenda for Development" and "An Agenda for Peace" and was convinced that those programmes could be fully implemented only with the cooperation of the entire international community achieved through the United Nations.

29. International economic cooperation for the protection of the environment required a high degree of knowledge of the quantitative and qualitative aspects of that protection. It also required the application of advanced technology that many countries, including Saudi Arabia and other member countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, did not possess. The donor countries would have to transfer that technology on favourable terms, a process that would help to strengthen international cooperation and narrow the gap between developed and developing countries.

30. Saudi Arabia was seeking to expand its industrial capacity in order to use the most modern production methods, for the benefit both of its own nationals and of all the peoples of the region, and required access to advanced technology in order to diversify its sources of revenue. The protectionism of the developed countries was slowing the growth of those new industries. The petroleum industry as an energy source was currently the object of measures, adopted under the pretext of protecting the environment, that stood in the way of healthy international trade. A distinction must be made between the financing of measures to protect the environment and proposals for the establishment of energy taxes. The implementation of such proposals would have a negative impact on the world economy in general and especially on the economies of the developing countries. Instead of protecting the environment, those proposals would be detrimental to international trade in the field of energy and create obstacles to the liberalization of trade and the strengthening of global economic activity. Furthermore, petroleum was already heavily taxed.

31. Before adopting economic measures to cope with climate changes, one must take account of the interrelationship between questions relating to energy, the environment and economic development, and the consequences of such measures must be analysed carefully. It was essential to formulate well-balanced global environmental-protection policies that were in keeping with the needs of sustainable economic development and did not thwart the liberalization of international trade.

32. Anyone who claimed to possess sufficient technical know-how to transform the desert into a garden was dreaming. The effort to control desertification and drought must continue, for victory had not yet been achieved. In the Gulf region, for example, the shortage of water and its equitable distribution constituted one of the spheres in which international cooperation could have substantial effects. The United Nations should strive to ensure that all the parties concerned about that question had access to the requisite experience and technical know-how.

33. Mr. PURSOO (Granada), speaking on behalf of the 12 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) that were United Nations Member States and of Suriname, said that those countries endorsed the statement of the Chairman of the Group of 77 and the Secretary-General's report on a development strategy for island developing countries (A/49/227 and Add.1 and 2).

34. Island developing countries, in addition to the problems of developing countries in general, were faced with specific characteristics that adversely affected their ability to achieve sustainable economic development. In many of those island countries, such development handicaps had even led some to question their very economic viability. The CARICOM countries were not merely island developing countries: they were, above all, small and vulnerable countries.

35. Although the disadvantages experienced by island developing countries were well documented, the criteria by which their well-being was judged tended to obscure that reality. The gross national product (GNP) per capita, the yardstick generally used to measure the level of development, did not by itself adequately reflect their vulnerability to external influences, nor the various handicaps with which they had to contend. The GNP was the indicator used to determine whether such countries deserved financial and technical assistance, with the result that their development prospects were curtailed still further. In his report, the Secretary-General advocated the construction of an indicator more in keeping with the peculiar characteristics of those economies.

36. The international competitive environment of the 1990s was usually not so competitive when it came to island developing countries, since their business initiatives were highly vulnerable to external dictates and frustrated by trade regulations that prevented them from competing on the markets of the more developed countries.

37. Island developing countries had been excluded from the giant trading blocs. Although the implications of the application of the Final Act of the Uruguay Round for the trade and development prospects of those countries had not yet been fully assessed, everything seemed to suggest that it would add to their marginalization and dependency. Talk of "aid fatigue" was intended to make the island developing countries of CARICOM understand that overdependence on aid might ultimately be detrimental to the long-term well-being of their economies.

38. Consequently, those countries had formulated their economic development objectives with a view to achieving economic self-sufficiency and genuine sustainability within a context of global interdependence. At the same time,

they felt concern over the widespread preoccupation with preordained development patterns. It was as if a development superhighway was contemplated for the rich, the mighty, the poor and the lame alike, regardless of their respective capabilities for travelling on it. If the global development agenda failed to recognize the specific vulnerabilities and needs of island developing countries, their very survival might be endangered.

39. The CARICOM member States wished once again to express their appreciation to the United Nations for convening the first Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, which had been held in Barbados from 25 April to 6 May 1994. The CARICOM member States also wished again to express their satisfaction at the outcome of the Conference. In his statement before the Conference, Mr. Gerard R. Latortue, head of the delegation of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) had noted that the concept of sustainability needed to be seen in the context of the rapid improvements in technology and had said that any country whose industry did not adjust to those changes would in fact be moving backwards. One of the most pressing economic development problems confronting the small island developing countries in the 1990s was their lack of the necessary technology and research and development capacity to compete in the current international economic environment, particularly in the areas of manufacturing and agriculture. There was an urgent need for those countries to employ more innovative means of developing their economies and for the international community to pay particular attention to their constraints and disadvantages and to assist them in their efforts to generate self-sufficiency.

40. Regional cooperation and integration offered opportunities for island developing countries to alleviate the limitations and constraints associated with smallness and remoteness.

41. In recent times a new phenomenon had sprung up in certain metropolitan areas of the world: the development of large migrant communities made up of people from the island countries. Those new communities constituted ideal markets for the commodities of the island countries, since the tastes and cultural identities of those communities had already been established and were well known. Unfortunately, there were still barriers to those markets in the form of regulations that required extensive organizational arrangements and large amounts of investment capital in order to bring the commodities to those communities. Most commodity exports from tropical islands were perishable. The lack of appropriate transportation, cumbersome custom regulations and difficulties in fulfilling other trade requirements were inhibiting island producers and sapping their entrepreneurial spirit.

42. In a world characterized by gross imbalances and varying opportunities, the disadvantaged countries must be afforded special assistance, even if only with a view to the attainment of specified objectives. The time had come to adopt vigorous measures to correct those imbalances.

43. Mr. PIRIZ BALLON (Uruguay), speaking also on behalf of Argentina and with reference to agenda item 88 (d), said that culture belonged on an equal footing

with politics and economics because, as a key component of nationhood, it was vital for growth, understanding and exchanges in human relations.

44. Since the whole world was undergoing profound changes, and culture had assumed much greater importance, every country and region must be prepared to deal with the new technology, the computer revolution and the new media and concepts in communications in order to use the cultural heritage and traditions to foster the advancement and well-being of peoples. Consequently, Argentina and Uruguay firmly supported the idea of considering the issue of culture in its broadest sense. The international community must foster a development approach aimed at achieving material prosperity and satisfying the needs of human beings, in particular with respect to the full enjoyment of their rights, freedom and cultural identity. On the eve of the twenty-first century, culture should be concerned with overcoming the scientific and technological gap between rich and poor societies, all kinds of discrimination and child abuse, and achieving universal education, equal opportunities, the emancipation of women and the eradication of war.

45. The international community must include those issues in the programmes of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and of other international agencies dealing with cultural development issues.

46. UNESCO had played an important role in the promotion of cultural development, particularly during the World Decade for Cultural Development. However, it was disturbing to note that the multiplicity of activities undertaken by the organization to promote the Decade was making it difficult to work on a detailed and precise analysis of development issues.

47. Mr. MIHALIK (Slovak Republic), referring to the integration of the economies in transition into the world economy, said that his country's economy was an economy in transition that had showed signs of recovery in 1994.

48. Support for a favourable international environment was required if the Slovak Republic's recovery was to be sustainable. That, in turn, was linked to factors such as access to foreign markets (especially those of the European Union), which was being hampered by protectionism (in spite of the liberalization achieved through various recent agreements with the European Union and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA)); the expansion of cooperation and trade among the economies in transition and encouragement for the creation of market institutions that would facilitate intra-group trade and broader economic cooperation; greater trade efficiency and the expansion of trade and cooperation with developing countries.

49. On the other hand, there were national economic problems such as high unemployment, heavy indebtedness of State-owned enterprises, the need to update the commercial banking sector, pressures on the domestic budget and imbalances in some social spending.

50. The most important issue in policy adjustment was securing a close relationship between macroeconomic and structural policies and institutional

building. His country's basic objectives were to achieve non-inflationary sustainable growth, reduce unemployment and raise living standards. Priority was being given to the process of privatization and it was expected that by 1995 the private sector's share in the gross domestic product would rise from its current level of 46 per cent to 64 per cent.

51. Any support from multilateral and bilateral sources would be welcomed. Promoting a favourable internal economic environment with a view to integration into the world economy required timely assistance. Such assistance should now consist mainly of foreign direct investment. Neither the delivery of assistance nor foreign direct investment had met expectations. The investment level necessary for restructuring Slovak industry on the basis of entrepreneurial projects would represent about 500 billion crowns for the period 1993-2000. Between 60 per cent and 75 per cent of that amount would have to be covered by outside resources.

52. Foreign trade was another factor in integrating the economies in transition into the European and world economies. His country's exports had been affected by the collapse of the markets of the former Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), the recession in western Europe and the sanctions imposed by the Security Council on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. As a result of those sanctions, the Slovak Republic, a traditional Danube trade partner, had lost about \$450 million. The establishment of trade and cooperation agreements in that area would improve his country's overall situation and bolster its capacity to export competitive goods.

53. The Slovak Republic welcomed the conclusion of the Uruguay Round and hoped that it would give a new impetus to a rule-based multilateral trading system and would result in greater transparency and predictability in global markets; it also welcomed the special assistance given to the transition economies by the United Nations system, including the assistance provided by the Economic Commission for Europe.

54. Ms. DARMANIN (Malta) said that a human existence in dignity lay at the core of any international cooperation in solving problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character. The delegation of Malta, therefore, attached fundamental importance to the reduction and eradication of poverty. Throughout its 50 years of existence, the United Nations had made innumerable efforts in that area, but poverty remained a primary concern for the international community, since it afflicted one fifth of the total world population.

55. Although substantial economic progress had been witnessed in some South-East Asian countries, although signs of recovery were appearing in the developing world and the economies in transition had made progress towards economic and political adjustment, the economic situation of many developing countries remained critical with no hope of aid or improvement in sight.

56. After endless discussions, plans and proposals on development, the time had come to make use of the knowledge gained to bring about real solutions to real

problems. It was difficult to identify a point of departure, especially regarding economic development, but there was no doubt that the most important and basic element of development was the human being. Economic growth and development depended almost entirely on the ability of a nation to enhance the human dimension and make it into a driving force behind growth. The lack of development in certain areas called for the international community to make capacity-building its main task.

57. A broader international approach to food security, reduction and eradication of poverty, lower unemployment, development of infrastructure and transfer of technology was needed in order to create a global environment conducive to sustainable development. The successful completion of the Uruguay Round following seven years of negotiations should have a positive impact on the world economy. Its achievements included the Agreement on Agriculture and the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing. The establishment of the World Trade Organization marked an unprecedented achievement in the creation of a more buoyant international economic system, and her delegation looked forward to the entry into force of the Final Act in 1995.

58. By the year 2000, half of humanity would live and work in cities; the other half would depend increasingly on cities for economic survival. Urban centres, however, were seriously affected by overcrowding, environmental degradation, social disruption, unemployment, and poor housing, infrastructure and services. The forthcoming United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) would provide an excellent opportunity to address those problems.

59. The industrialized nations could provide the technical knowledge which would ensure that industrial development was achieved in a sustainable manner, not at the expense of the environment. Her delegation welcomed the effectiveness with which the Commission on Sustainable Development was functioning. At the meeting recently held in Tunis on the sustainable development of the Mediterranean region, Malta had proposed that the principle of sustainable development should be incorporated into the framework of the Mediterranean Plan. Malta also considered the current debate on an agenda for development and the forthcoming World Summit for Social Development among the most important initiatives aimed at addressing socio-economic problems.

60. It had been thought that, with the end of the cold war, the fight against poverty would be intensified. That had not happened. Better governance and regional and international cooperation, complemented by political determination, could lead to the final defeat of poverty, the promotion of sustainable development, and, in the end, the elimination of the grave threat to peace and stability that lack of development represented.

61. Mr. YOTOV (Bulgaria) said that his country agreed that the successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round was a prerequisite for creating a more favourable economic environment for the expansion of the world trading system and for the integration of all countries into the world economy. Bulgaria attached particular importance to becoming an original member of the World Trade

Organization, and would finalize negotiations for accession to GATT before the deadline.

62. As noted from the World Economic and Social Survey 1994, although the world economic situation showed some positive trends in terms of economic performance in the industrialized countries and in a number of developing countries, the situation in most of the economies in transition, including Bulgaria, remained precarious. Bulgaria was endeavouring to continue with market-oriented reforms aimed at its full integration into the world economy and particularly into European economic structures. In its view, improved market access was much more important in terms of supporting the reforms than any other form of assistance. It shared the opinion, therefore, that a greater degree of tariff liberalization, in compliance with the GATT rules, would give new impetus to the expansion of international trade and would create a supportive international environment for economic growth and development.

63. The Government of Bulgaria, aware of the importance of establishing an adequate institutional and legal framework at the national level for the smooth functioning of a market-based economy, had taken radical steps to liberalize trade and deregulate the economy and had further liberalized the banking and financial systems; it had also adopted sound foreign exchange policy, concluded trade agreements with the member States of the European Union, the European Free Trade Association and the Group of 24 and completed foreign debt rescheduling negotiations with the London and Paris Clubs. In 1994, the Government had adopted an ambitious programme to continue macroeconomic stabilization. Although significant efforts were still needed to complete the economic restructuring, Bulgaria was determined to speed up the pace of reform.

64. Bulgaria welcomed the efforts made by UNCTAD at the fortieth session of the Trade and Development Board to analyze the impact of the Uruguay Round on the international trading system and, in that context, to examine the opportunities and problems that developing countries and the economies in transition would face in seeking to increase their participation in international trade in goods and services during the 1990s. The UNCTAD programmes were useful and pragmatic, especially the Trade Efficiency Programme; the latter should continue after the international trade symposium in Columbus, Ohio.

65. Integrating the countries in transition into the world economy remained a priority task for the international community if it wished to achieve stable economic development; the latter would be severely hampered if the reforms under way in those countries failed to produce tangible results within a reasonable time-frame.

66. The report of the Secretary-General (A/49/330) contained useful conclusions, and Bulgaria agreed with the observation that the efforts of the international community in assisting the economies in transition, whether at bilateral, regional or international levels, had not yet produced the expected results.

67. Given the magnitude and complexity of the reform process, significant international support was required. The United Nations and its specialized agencies should continue to strengthen their activities aimed at supporting that process. The potential of the United Nations system should be better utilized at the regional and international levels. Cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and the international financial institutions should be strengthened. Also, improved cross-sectoral and inter-agency coordination was needed within the United Nations in order to offer a more viable response to the needs of those countries.

68. Mr. GAMZOU (Israel), referring to the report of the Secretary-General on food and agricultural development (A/49/438), expressed particular concern about strong evidence that agricultural output could not be increased in an environmentally sustainable manner if current agricultural practices and trends continued. Feeding an increasing world population would require vast cooperative efforts with a view to the diversification of agriculture and the use of farming techniques which would contribute to environmental regeneration.

69. He stressed the urgency of finding the necessary means to resolve the extremely serious problems of poverty, hunger, desertification and environmental degradation and of intensifying collective efforts to take agreed and effective action.

70. Israel believed that its experience could be very useful to the rest of the world. In a single generation, Israel had increased its agricultural production at an unprecedented annual growth rate of 10 per cent. That demonstrated that even poorly endowed regions could be developed through sophisticated agriculture in a sustainable and environmentally-friendly manner. In addition to cultivating new varieties of fruits and vegetables and seeds of high genetic quality, it had achieved the highest degree of water control in the world with the aim of turning arid deserts into fertile soil.

71. Agriculture was one of the chief sectors in which Israeli farmers and scientists could cooperate with their Arab neighbours. Israel was prepared to become an active partner in a joint effort to develop agriculture in the region and to maximize food supplies from domestic sources. To that end, it was making its agricultural know-how available to its neighbours and other countries in the areas of irrigation, high-quality seeds, artificial insemination, machinery and agricultural extension. It was also prepared to cooperate in developing agricultural trade in the region.

72. Israeli and Egyptian farmers had already succeeded in creating a model of cooperation in agriculture and agricultural cooperation was one of the pillars of the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan and of the agreements between Israel and the Palestinians.

73. Israel, which was interested in cooperating with countries in other parts of the world as well, was prepared to participate actively in projects administered by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

(FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other international agencies.

74. Mr. RADHY (Bahrain) noted the tremendous political and economic impact of the changes which had taken place in the world and which had driven the reform of the United Nations with a view to meeting countries' expectations in the economic and social spheres and in the area of security. Many observers believed that the current economic situation was encouraging and held greater promise for economic and social development, provided that the international community adhered to the principles and commitments relating to development contained, in particular, in the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation and Agenda 21 and implemented the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade.

75. The signing of the Final Act of the Uruguay Round at Marrakesh marked the beginning of a new era. It was to be hoped that the international trade system would be strengthened on the basis of transparency, equity and non-discrimination. His Government was concerned about the tendency to impose certain forms of protectionism on environmental pretexts. It appealed to the international community to abandon protectionist measures which closed international markets to the exports of developing countries. In keeping with the spirit of international cooperation, developed countries must help developing countries to integrate into the international economy.

76. His delegation echoed the request of the Secretary-General for greater cooperation in multilateral trade and his appeal for improved cooperation between the United Nations and GATT. It also welcomed the most recent activities of UNCTAD designed to coordinate United Nations efforts with a view to addressing more effectively questions relating to development and trade, financing, investment, services and the technology of developing countries. It was also to be hoped that cooperation between UNCTAD and the World Trade Organization (WTO) would produce positive results.

77. The eradication of poverty was another challenge facing the international community. While it was clearly an effort in which all Member States must engage - for it was incumbent on them to devise and implement national policies to satisfy the basic needs of their peoples - poverty eradication was also the responsibility of the international community. The international community must redouble its efforts, building on past experience, to create a secure and stable economic environment. The World Summit for Social Development, to be held at Copenhagen in 1995, would provide an historic opportunity for the highest political authorities in the world to formulate a strategy for the permanent eradication of poverty, and for the United Nations to submit studies which would help determine the economic and social causes of poverty with a view to formulating programmes for their elimination.

78. Mr. CISSE (Senegal) said that urban growth had become a world-wide phenomenon which had consequences for all sectors - including the economic, social, environmental and security sectors - in all countries. The United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) should seek to contribute

specific solutions to the problems of cities in the areas of education, health, drinking water supply, energy and transport, and to questions relating to overcrowding, infrastructure, the disposal of wastes and hygiene. It would also be necessary to deal with the problems of increased poverty, unemployment, social disintegration, ethnic tension and violence, crime, drug abuse, homelessness, the rural exodus and urbanization. Nor should vulnerable groups such as women, children, the disabled and marginalized groups be overlooked.

79. The objectives of Habitat II should also reflect the decisions and recommendations of the major historic United Nations conferences of the 1990s.

80. With regard to financing, donor countries, specialized agencies, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UNDP and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) must lend their support to the trust funds in order to enable the secretariat of Habitat II to help developing countries to prepare for the Conference.

81. Senegal supported the convening of a third session of the Preparatory Committee in New York in early 1996 in order to enlist the strongest possible political support on the part of Member States.

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.